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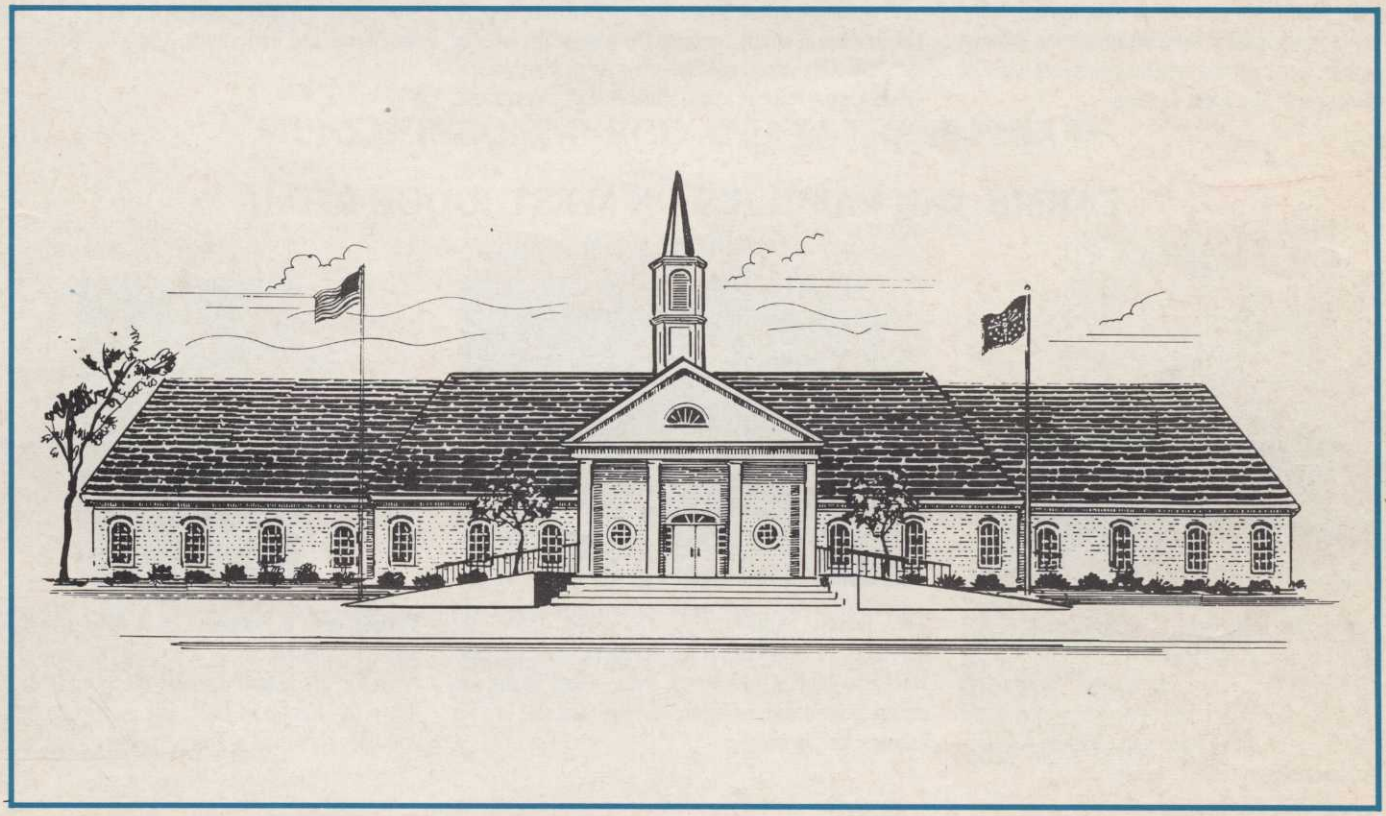
Ready Reference - Munster

HISTORICAL PHOTOS

IN THE MUNSTER, INDIANA, TOWN HALL



To help its citizens develop a better appreciation of the Town's history, the Town of Munster in 1988 had these 19 photographs hung in the main meeting room of the Munster Town Hall. The descriptions below begin with the pictures in the Northeast corner of the room — toward the right end of the front table.

THE BRASS TAVERN AND THE MUNSTER SCHOOL

(the northeast wall)

The Brass Tavern, one of the earliest buildings erected in this area, was built about 1845 at the present day intersection of Ridge Road and Columbia Avenue by Allen and Julia Watkins Brass. Mrs. Brass was the daughter of a Revolutionary War veteran and the D.A.R. chapter in Crown Point is named in her honor. This inn served as a meeting place for local residents while also providing overnight accommodations for travelers. It was through a telegraph located here that area residents first heard of the assasination of President Lincoln.

Portraits of Johann and Wilhelmina Stallbohm. This German-born couple purchased the Brass Tavern in 1864, renamed it the Stallbohm Inn, and operated it until about 1895. The former inn then served as a home for the Stallbohms until it burned to the ground in 1909. The piano, which was removed from the building as it was burning, is now owned by the Munster Historical Society. The Stallbohm family continued to live on the wooded corner of Ridge Road and Columbia Avenue until 1988. The land now belongs to the Munster Park Department.

The Munster School. This modern school was built in 1914 on land adjacent to the Stallbohm property and was Munster's only public school for over 30 years. The wing on the back was added in 1928 and another was added to the front in 1942. The name of the school was changed in 1950 to Lanier Elementary School. The building was razed in 1980; it is now the site of the Center for the Visual and Performing Arts.

FARMS AND FAMILIES ON WEST RIDGE ROAD

(southeast wall)

A man outstanding in his field. C. P. Schoon was typical of the many farmers in Munster at the beginning of the twentieth century. Onions were the farmers' biggest cash crop. This well-manicured onion field was located on the southwest corner of Ridge Road and Calumet Avenue, where the Jewel/Osco Store is today.

The Jansen Family. This photograph shows the harvesting of onion sets at the Jansen farm located near where the Monon tracks cross Ridge Road. Onion sets are immature onions which are harvested and sold to other farmers for planting.

Portrait of C. P. Schoon. This Holland-born farmer was active in political circles and served as North Township Assessor. He helped organize the incorporation of the Town of Munster in 1907, was elected its first Clerk, and later served as a Town Trustee.

The Gerbrand Kooy Home. One of the many wooden farm houses that lined Ridge Road at the beginning of the twentieth century, this house was built by its many-talented owner, Gerband Kooy.

Portrait of Gerbrand and Mary Kooy. Born in an Illinois barn, Gerbrand Kooy built many of the early farm houses in town, helped his neighbors find well water, made violins to help entertain his neighbors, and built coffins for them when they died. He and his wife, Mary, reared 14 children.

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH AND SCHOOL

(back wall)

Ridge Road about 1910. This picture of Ridge Road, near its present intersection with Hohman Avenue, shows the Munster Christian Reformed Church (until World War II the only church in town), the Munster Christian School, and the home of the school principal. The vehicle was John Swart's grocery wagon.

A Classroom in the Christian School, 1915. The teacher in the back was John Tuls. When the school was demolished in 1942, it was replaced with a new building just across the state line in Lansing. The new school still serves the Munster and Lansing community.

MUNSTER COMMERCE AND ENTREPRENEURS

(southwest wall)

The Klootwyk General Store. Peter Klootwyk opened this store on Ridge Road in the 1870's and it remained a viable business serving the Munster community until the 1950's. The two children in this 1905 photograph are his children, Peter and Mary. The building today holds a dentist's office and a travel agency.

Mart Jabaay's Barber Shop was built in 1928 on a corner of the Jabaay farm near Hohman Avenue. It stayed open through the Great Depression and today is Munster's oldest business — still in operation at its original location.

Portrait of Aaron Hart. Hart purchased and drained thousands of acres of cheap swampland in south Munster and Dyer. Hart's Ditch flows through the southern part of town and forms the Town's boundary with Highland at Ridge Road. He died while inspecting an uncompleted section of the ditch in 1883.

Mace's Bar-B-Q. One of Munster's classier businesses, located at the corner of Ridge and Calumet, Maces was well known beyond the Town borders as a place one could get a good drink and place a good bet.

Mrs. Baker's Adventures In Good Eating graced the Southwest corner of Ridge and Calumet in the 1930's. The Calumet National Bank now occupies the site.

THE MUNSTER FAMILY AND THE OLD TOWN HALL

(northwest wall)

The Munster Homestead stood north of Ridge Road, a little east of Calumet Avenue. Although born in the Netherlands, Jacob Munster grew up at this location and built this house when he inherited his father's farm. Jacob established one of the Town's first businesses, a general store which contained the town's first post office.

The Jacob Munster family. Jacob Munster with his wife Henrietta and their twelve children. In 1907 when the Munster was incorporated as a town, it was decided to name the Town in his honor.

The Munster Town Hall (1920-1982) was erected on land that had been part of the Munster family farm. As the Town's population increased from 600 to more than 20,000 persons, the building became cramped and very inefficient. The building was sold in 1982 and is now the home of the Old Town Hall Restaurant.

THE MASTER PLAN OF 1938

(front entrance of the building)

By the middle of the 1930's, the need for a comprehensive plan for the Town became apparent and a Master Plan was made in 1938. This plan, one of the first in Indiana, helped guide the Town from a one stop-light town to a modern suburban community of more than 20,000 residents. Although the plan current 1988 plan is quite different from this one, many basic tenents remain the same. Both provide for quiet residential neighborhoods, a smooth flow of traffic through distinct commercial areas, and areas set aside for light industry.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Aerial photographs of the Town of Munster are on display along the west hallway. This collection graphically shows the development of the town.

HISTORICAL SITES IN MUNSTER

Site of the Brass Tavern: On the southeast corner of Ridge Road and Columbia Avenue is a brass plaque affixed to a granite boulder which marks the site of the Brass Tavern.

Rotary Park: In 1976 the Munster Rotary Club erected three sculptures at the corner of Ridge and Columbia representing an American Indian, a farmer, and an iron worker. These three sculptures represent the three stages of the town's history: the time before permanent settlement when Indians traveled through the area, the rural community from about 1850 to 1920, and the suburban community in which most residents sought employment in the industrial cities to the north.

The Old Town Hall Restaurant: Restored and decorated with photographs depicting the Town's early history.

Pizza Hut: On the site of the Jacob Munster General Store, it is also decorated with historical photos.

The Klootwyk Building at 619 Ridge Road: The oldest commercial building in Town, it once held the Klootwyk General Store.

CREDITS

The Town of Munster expresses its thanks to Jim and Marie Nasheim of Creative Art Photos and to Lee Allen of the Town Gallery for their services in the printing and the framing of these photographs in the main meeting room, and to Ken Schoon for selecting photos and writing the historical narrative.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Town on the Ridge: A History of Munster, Indiana by Lance Trusty; Regional Studies Institute, Purdue University Calumet. 1982. (For sale at the Munster Parks and Recreation Department office) or contact the **Munster Historical Society,** 1005 Ridge Road, Munster, Indiana 46321.